Doubling of cotton crop area

478. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India doubled its Bt cotton crop area to around 10,00,000 hectares in 2003;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to the International Services for Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications Study, India has a large potential to increase in acreage of biotech plants; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to bring in more and more biotech crop area under cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Bt cotton hybrids cultivation during Kharif-2002 was estimated to be 29,000 hectares and was about 85,200 hectares during Kharif-2003, as per the sales figure of the three Bt cotton hybrids released into the environment.

(b) According to the International Services for Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications, India has a large potential to increase the acreage of cultivation of biotech plants since India is a country having diverse agricultural activities with a capacity to adapt and cultivate various biotech crops suitable to a given agro-climatic conditions.

(c) The Government of India has constituted a Task Force on 'Applications of Agricultural Biotechnology' to provide a road map for adoption and release of transgenic crops in Indian agriculture. The report of the Task Force is under consideration of the Government of India. The report has suggested guidelines for introducing biotech crops in several areas consistent with farmers' interest.

Funding of research work

479. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that research and development are most important for development of the country in view of the global research competition;